

APPLICATION NO	PA/2016/1417
APPLICANT	John Halmshaw Partners
DEVELOPMENT	Planning permission for alterations to an existing outbuilding (Unit 4) within the curtilage of Wootton Hall, including construction of a dormer window, in conjunction with a change of use to form a dwelling
LOCATION	Wootton Hall, Vicarage Lane, Wootton, DN39 6SH
PARISH	Wootton
WARD	Ferry
CASE OFFICER	Andrew Law
SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION	Grant permission subject to conditions
REASONS FOR REFERENCE TO COMMITTEE	Objection by Wootton Parish Council
POLICIES	

National Planning Policy Framework: Paragraph 38 requires local planning authorities to approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way.

Paragraph 47 states that *“planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.”*

Paragraph 130 states that *“permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions...”*

Paragraph 189 states that *“in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting.”*

Paragraph 190 required local planning authorities to identify and assess the significance of heritage assets that may be affected by a proposal...taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise.

Paragraph 192 states that in determining applications, *“local planning authorities should take account of:*

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*

c) *the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.*”

Paragraph 193 states that “*when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation...*”

Paragraph 194 states that “*any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset...should require clear and convincing justification.*”

North Lincolnshire Local Plan:

Policy DS1 (General Requirements)

Policy RD2 (Development in the Open Countryside)

Policy RD9 (Re-use and/or Adaptation of Rural Buildings for Residential Use in the Open Countryside)

Policy HE5 (Development affecting Listed Buildings)

Policy LC5 (Species Protection)

North Lincolnshire Core Strategy:

Policy CS1 (Spatial Strategy for North Lincolnshire)

Policy CS2 (Delivering More Sustainable Development)

Policy CS3 (Development Limits)

Policy CS5 (Delivering Quality Design in North Lincolnshire)

Policy CS6 (Historic Environment)

Policy CS17 (Biodiversity)

CONSULTATIONS

Highways: No objection or comments.

HER (Conservation): No objection subject to conditions.

HER (Archaeology): No objection subject to conditions.

Ecology: Initially objected as the barn has the potential for bats and nesting birds and no protected species surveys had been submitted with the application. Following the completion of bat and nesting bird surveys the ecologist has confirmed that there would be harm to a bat roost. Planning permission can only be granted if sufficient evidence is presented that the tests of European Protected Species licensing are met. Conditions are recommended should planning permission be granted.

PARISH COUNCIL

Wootton Parish Council objects to the proposal as it is quite considerable for a small village and the parish councillors have expressed concerns regarding noise and disturbance from use and the possible adverse effect on a listed building.

PUBLICITY

Neighbouring properties have been notified by letter, and site and press notices posted. No comments or objections have been received.

ASSESSMENT

This application was deferred at a previous meeting of the planning committee to enable members to visit the site prior to making a decision.

Site

The application site consists of former stables and outbuildings originally built as working buildings associated with the adjacent grade II* listed Wootton Hall in 1796. The buildings are configured in an L-shape built in the vernacular brick with Welsh slate roofs. The buildings are grade II listed and also make an important contribution to the character of this historic site as a whole. The buildings are one and a half storey and the northern block has its original first floor in place.

Proposal

This application seeks planning permission for the change of use of the buildings to a dwelling, along with associated alterations, including the installation of a dormer window.

The main issues to consider in the determination of this application are whether the conversion of the buildings is acceptable in principle and whether the works will have an unacceptable impact on the character of the listed building, or upon protected or priority species.

Principle

Policy RD9 of the North Lincolnshire Local Plan sets out the council's approach to proposals for the residential use of rural buildings in the open countryside. This policy is supportive of residential conversion of architecturally or historically important buildings provided that this is the only way of retaining the building and the design of the conversion is acceptable and will not result in harm to protected species.

The conversion of the stables to residential use is part of a larger scheme for the whole historic site which involves the expansion of the residential use on the site. The buildings have historic importance due to their association with the main hall and, given their size and location adjacent to existing and proposed residential units, it is considered that their residential conversion is the only viable way to secure a future use for the buildings. On this basis it is considered that the proposed residential conversion is justified to ensure that the buildings have a viable use and are maintained to retain their contribution to the site as a whole. Therefore, the proposals are considered to accord with policy RD9 and are acceptable in principle.

Design and impact on the listed building

The form of the buildings, with a first floor in place, lends itself to residential conversion. In terms of external changes, these have been limited to a small number of windows and a dormer in the roof. Therefore, the converted buildings will retain the appearance of a set of traditional Georgian agricultural buildings. Consequently, the historic appearance of the stables and outbuildings has been maintained.

Internally the main original layout and historic fabric has been left intact. The main internal additions are a new stair and a small amount of partition walling for a bathroom. These have a limited impact on the internal character of the building and can be justified to ensure its continued use. Internally the residential space has been well designed to conserve the original format of the buildings.

For the above reasons, it is considered that the conversion has been sympathetically designed to retain the key architectural features and original form of the buildings.

Protected and priority species

The council's ecologist initially raised objections to this application on the grounds that the buildings have the potential to house bats and nesting birds and that no survey work had been undertaken to establish whether protected and/or priority species were present.

Following this initial objection by the ecologist the applicants have subsequently undertaken the requested survey work. The ecologist has confirmed that the methods used and the survey effort deployed are appropriate for the site in question. The surveys revealed the presence of a maternity roost of brown long-eared bats.

The proposal is to significantly alter the building that supports the identified bat roosts. Therefore, the local planning authority must consider whether there are satisfactory alternatives to the proposal that would avoid the impact on bats and whether the scheme will provide overriding benefits in the public interest that would justify this impact. The scheme must also result in favourable conservation status in order for a European Protected Species licence to be granted for the works.

With regard to satisfactory alternatives, it should be noted that the buildings in question are currently vacant and have been disused for some time. If no alternative use is found for the buildings it is likely that they will deteriorate and that the bat roost could be put in danger. Deterioration of the buildings would also be detrimental to the character and appearance of the historic site. It is considered that residential conversion is the only viable option to secure the long-term use and maintenance of the building, particularly as this proposal forms part of the residential development of the wider historic site. If the site is not developed then the buildings could eventually be lost.

The buildings are grade II listed and are of special historic interest in their own right and as a result of their association with the grade II* listed Wootton Hall. The loss or degradation of these buildings would be detrimental to the setting of Wootton Hall and the historic significance of the wider site. The proposed conversion scheme would secure a new permanent use for the buildings and therefore also secure their long-term retention and maintenance. It is considered that the retention of the buildings is of overriding public interest and would be of benefit to the local environment.

With regard to the conservation status of the site, the applicant has submitted a detailed mitigation strategy for bats. This will retain the existing roost location with only slight modification proposed. Additional bat boxes will also be installed. Therefore, the council's ecologist has confirmed that the development, as currently proposed, passes the Favourable Conservation Status test of EPS licensing.

Conditions are proposed by the ecologist to secure the protected species mitigation and ensure that there is no unacceptable impact in this regard.

Other matters

The buildings are sited within the curtilage of Wootton Hall and are isolated from other residential properties, not associated with the Hall. The use of these buildings as a dwelling will not impact on the amenity of neighbouring residential properties.

Conclusion

For the reasons outlined above, it is considered that the proposed development is well designed and that any impact of the development can be suitably mitigated by the recommended conditions. The development will secure the long-term viability and maintenance of this important heritage asset. Therefore the proposed development is considered to be acceptable and this application should be supported.

RECOMMENDATION Grant permission subject to the following conditions:

1.
The development must be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason

To comply with section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2.
The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 1991/P1, 1991/E2, 1991/4/E1.1, 1991/4/P3, 1991/4/P4, 1991/4/P5, 1991/4/P6, DS(4).1, DS(4).2, DS(4).3 and 1991-P DS7.

Reason

For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3.
No above-ground work shall take place until samples of the external facing materials to be used have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority and only the approved materials shall be used.

Reason

To ensure that the building is in keeping with its surroundings in the interests of visual amenity, in accordance with policy DS1 of the North Lincolnshire Local Plan.

4.
All new windows and doors shall be constructed in timber and shall be retained as such thereafter.

Reason

To protect the character and appearance of the listed building in accordance with policies HE5 of the North Lincolnshire Local Plan and CS6 of the North Lincolnshire Core Strategy.

5.

No alteration or development shall take place until a mitigation strategy providing for an historic building record and programme of archaeological recording, as defined in a brief prepared by the North Lincolnshire Historic Environment Record, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The strategy shall include details of the following:

- (i) measures to ensure the preservation by record of the historic buildings and archaeological features
- (ii) methodologies for the recording of the historic buildings and recovery of archaeological remains, including artefacts and ecofacts
- (iii) post-fieldwork methodologies for assessment and analyses
- (iv) report content and arrangements for dissemination, and publication proposals
- (v) archive preparation and deposition with recognised repositories
- (vi) a timetable of works in relation to the proposed development, including sufficient notification and allowance of time to ensure that the site work is undertaken and completed in accordance with the strategy
- (vii) monitoring arrangements, including the notification in writing to the North Lincolnshire Historic Environment Record of the commencement of historic building and archaeological works and the opportunity to monitor such works
- (viii) a list of all staff involved in the implementation of the strategy, including sub-contractors and specialists, their responsibilities and qualifications.

Reason

To comply with policy HE9 of the North Lincolnshire Local Plan as the site contains heritage assets of archaeological interest that the proposals may damage or disturb; less than substantial harm to the archaeological interest may be mitigated by a programme of recording.

6.

The mitigation strategy shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and timings, subject to any variations agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason

To comply with policy HE9 of the North Lincolnshire Local Plan as the site contains heritage assets of archaeological interest that the proposals may damage or disturb; less than substantial harm to the archaeological interest may be mitigated by a programme of recording.

7.

A copy of any analysis, reporting, publication or archiving required as part of the mitigation strategy shall be deposited at the North Lincolnshire Historic Environment Record within six months of the date of completion of the development hereby approved by this permission or such other period as may be agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason

To comply with policy HE9 of the North Lincolnshire Local Plan as the site contains heritage assets of archaeological interest that the proposals may damage or disturb; less than substantial harm to the archaeological interest may be mitigated by a programme of recording.

8.

Works and biodiversity enhancements shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the Mitigation Strategy for Bats set out in section 7.1 of the submitted Bat Survey Report, reference no. CE0339, dated 1st September 2017. The management prescriptions set out in section 7.1 of the Bat Survey Report shall be carried out in their entirety in accordance with the stipulated timescales. Prior to the completion of the approved development, the applicant or their successor in title shall submit a report to the local planning authority, providing evidence of compliance with the Mitigation Strategy for Bats. All biodiversity features shall be retained thereafter.

Reason

To conserve and enhance biodiversity in accordance with policies CS5 and CS17 of the North Lincolnshire Core Strategy.

Informative

In determining this application, the council, as local planning authority, has taken account of the guidance in paragraph 38 of the National Planning Policy Framework in order to seek to secure sustainable development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area.

